

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----030027 231615Z /41

O 231431Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8810
INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 2800

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SO, US
SUBJ: SENDING OF U.S. MILITARY SURVEY TEAM TO SOMALIA

REF: STATE 159901

1. WASHINGTON SHOULD KNOW THAT PMGSE HAS TAKEN NOTE OF FACT THAT MILITARY SURVEY TEAM HAS NOT YET VISITED SOMALIA DESPITE EXPECTATIONS BASED ON FOREIGN MINISTER FELEKE'S JUNE 2 MEETING WITH SECRETARY IN NEW YORK AND MOFA AMERICAS DIVISION HEAD BERHANE DERESSE'S MEETING JUNE 5 HERE WITH ME. AS RECENTLY AS JUNE 21, BERHANE ASKED ME AT INDIAN EMBASSY DINNER WHETHER TEAM HAD LEFT AND WHETHER I HAD ANY NEWS ON WHEN IT MIGHT GO. AT THAT POINT, I COULD HONESTLY ANSWER "NO" TO BOTH QUESTIONS.

2. BERHANE WAS OBVIOUSLY PLEASED AND I AM CONVINCED REPORTED IT TO HIGHER AUTHORITY, PERHAPS EVEN TO PMAC MEMBER IN CHARGE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MAJ. BERHANU BEYEH. THAT, OF COURSE, IS ONLY SPECULATION. IN ANY CASE, FROM READING PARIS HERALD TRIBUNE AND US MAGAZINES, BERHANE AND FRIENDS UNDERSTAND THAT A POLICY DEBATE IS GOING ON IN WASHINGTON CONCERNING AFRICA AND ARE KEEPING THEIR FINGERS CROSSED THAT US WILL NOT MAKE THE DECISION WHICH

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THEY SAY WILL DRIVE MENGISTU CLOSER TO SOVIETS AND CUBANS. WE HAVE ALSO RECEIVED INFORMATION REPORTED THROUGH OTHER CHANNELS THAT CHAIRMAN MENGISTU AND APPROPRIATE DIRG MEMBERS HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING RELATIONS WITH UNITED STATES IN LIGHT OF WHAT MENGISTU REPORTEDLY SEES AS INEVITABLE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA. WHAT WE DIDN'T FIND OUT WAS OUTCOME OF DISCUSSIONS, IF ANY, PARTICULARLY WHAT COUNTER-

ACTION PMGSE MAY BE PLANNING TO TAKE.

3. IN MEANTIME, NEWS FROM SOMALIA OF ETHIOPIAN AIR ATTACK ON FIVE NORTHERN SOMALIA TOWNS AND VILLAGES AND OF "WSLF" RECAPTURE OF GODE IN ETHIOPIA HAS REACHED ADDIS THROUGH INTERNATIONAL MEDIA. THESE REPORTS HAVE NOT BEEN CONFIRMED BUT, IF TRUE, INDICATE WAR IN OGADEN IS DEFINITELY HEATING UP AGAIN. EVEN IF NOT TRUE OR ONLY PARTIALLY SO, THEY INDICATE ESCALATION IN WAR OF WORDS AND MAKE OUR TASK OF GETTING ETHIOPIA TO MINIMIZE REACTION TO MILITARY SURVEY MISSION ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT. EMBASSY BELIEVES THERE IS SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE THAT ETHIOPIAN LOSSES AND SOMALI SUPPORT FOR SO-CALLED WSLF IS APPROACHING LEVEL DAMAGING TO US CREDIBILITY HERE WITH PMGSE THAT BASIS FOR US DEFENSIVE MILITARY SUPPORT IS ASSURANCES FROM SIAD THAT HE WISHES TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH HIS NEIGHBORS.

4. TAKING YOUR LAST QUESTION FIRST, WE AGREE THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO INFORM PMGSE OFFICIALLY OF FIRM DATE FOR TEAM'S VISIT WITH AS MUCH LEAD TIME AS POSSIBLE. I WOULD IN THIS CASE INFORM BERHANE. FACT OF INFORMING MOFA OFFICIALLY RATHER THAN THROUGH PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO ATTENUATE DIRG REACTION VERY MUCH, BUT IT WILL AT LEAST HELP PRESERVE GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH MOFA OFFICIALS WITH WHOM WE HAVE TO DEAL AND GIVE ADDED CREDIBILITY TO OUR CLAIM THAT BOTH SIDES SHOULD
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AVOID UNNECESSARY SURPRISES.

5. ON BALANCE, WE BELIEVE IT IS STILL BEST FOR TACTICAL PURPOSES TO INDICATE THAT SENDING OF TEAM BY NO MEANS OBLIGATES US TO PROCEED TO PROVIDE ARMS. SUCH ASSERTION HAS ADVANTAGE OF POSSIBLY DELAYING VIOLENT REACTION, AND IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT A

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 2800

EXDIS

DELAY IS AN OBJECTIVE IN ITSELF. OUR POSITION WOULD BE STRENGTHENED IF WE COULD POINT OUT CASES OF WHERE SENDING SIMILAR MILITARY SURVEY TEAM ACTUALLY DID RESULT IN DECISION NOT RPT NOT TO PROVIDE SOME FORM OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE. IF THERE ARE ANY SUCH CASES, PLEASE PROVIDE THIS INFORMATION WHEN AND IF INSTRUCTIONS ARE SENT TO PROCEED WITH INFORMING PMGSE.

6. ALTHOUGH DELAYING TACTIC HAS THE ADVANTAGES MENTIONED ABOVE, IF WE REALLY FEEL THAT WE ARE GOING TO END UP BY SUPPLYING MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA, THEN THERE ARE SOME ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF BITING THE BULLET NOW. IF AMBASSADOR CHAPIN ARRIVES AND HAS TO REITERATE IN EARLY CONTACTS THAT SURVEY TEAM IS NOT A COMMITMENT AND THEN VERY SOON HAS TO TURN AROUND AND INFORM PMGSE WE HAVE DECIDED TO SUPPLY ARMS, HIS CREDIBILITY WILL NOT GET OFF TO A GOOD START.

7. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THERE IS ONE CHANCE IN A HUNDRED THAT DIRG-LEVEL DECISION-MAKERS COULD BE PERSUADED TO ACCEPT IDEA THAT SURVEY TEAM WOULD BE A FIRST INDUCEMENT TO SIAD TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH HIS NEIGHBORS. THEY HAVE REPEATEDLY TOLD US AND EXPECT US TO BELIEVE ON THE BASIS OF HISTORY THAT SIAD, BY HIS VERY NATURE, CANNOT BE

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COUNTED ON TO STOP REASSERTING SOMALI IRREDENTISM. HIS WITHDRAWAL FROM THE OGADEN WAS BROUGHT ABOUT THROUGH ETHIOPIAN MILITARY VICTORY AND NOT BY APPEALS FROM FOREIGN POWERS THAT HE LIVE IN PEACE WITH HIS NEIGHBORS. ETHIOPIANS SIMPLY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT AMERICANS CAN BE ANY MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN THE RUSSIANS IN GETTING HIM TO KEEP ANY KIND OF PROMISE, WRITTEN OR ORAL, NOT TO USE FORCE OUTSIDE HIS INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED TERRITORY. ALTHOUGH ETHIOPIANS UNDOUBTEDLY DO NOT WANT TO SEE HIS MILITARY CAPABILITY ADDED TO, WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THEY OPPOSE EVEN MORE THE INCREASED INTERNATIONAL STATURE WHICH WOULD ACCRUE TO SIAD IF THE USG WERE TO ESTABLISH MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMALIA. ANYTHING WHICH LESSENS HIS IMAGE AS THE PARIAH OF AFRICA TENDS TO BOOST

HIS CLAIMS TO AREAS OF ETHIOPIA, KENYA DND DJIBOUTI. IT WE HAD BEEN ABLE TO EXTRACT A PUBLIC RENUNCIATION OF THOSE CLAIMS, THEN OUR SIGN OF FRIENDSHIP WITH SIAD WOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED, BUT NOT UNTIL THEN, EVEN IF ETHIOPIANS ACCEPT THE THESIS THAT US AID WILL ONLY BE DEFENSIVE, WHICH THEY WON'T, THEN IT FOLLOWS THAT WE BELIEVE ETHIOPIA IS A THREAT TO SOMALIA, SINCE NO OTHER COUNTRY IS. WE REALIZE THIS KIND OF THINKING IS SHMEWHAT CONTORTED, BUT POINT IT OUT TO EMPHASIZE DEPTH OF PROBABLE ETHIOPIAN REACTION.

8. WE STILL BELIEVE THAT NEWS OF SURVEY MISSION IN ITSELF WILL PROBABLY NOT LEAD TO BREAK IN RELATIONS. HOWEVER, PMGSE WILL PROBABLY FEEL THAT IT HAS TO ESCALATE ITS ALREADY STRONG THREATS, AND POSSIBILITY THAT IT MIGHT WITHDRAW AGREEMENT OR MERELY ASK THAT AMBASSADOR DELAY HIS ARRIVAL INDEFINITELY SHOULD NOT BE DISCOUNTED. THERE IS LESS CHANCE OF THOSE EVENTUALITIES IF THE ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE AFTER THE AMBASSADOR

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ARRIVES, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND IS SCHEDULED FOR JULY 5. ANOTHER MEASURE WHICH THE PMGSE MIGHT TAKE TO SHOW ITS DISPLEASURE -- WHETHER THE TEAM ARRIVES JULY 3 OR JULY 10 -- IS TO KEEP THE AMBASSADOR WAITING TO PRESENT HIS CREDENTIALS. IN ANY CASE, ARRIVAL OF SURVEY TEAM IN SOMALIA MORE OR LESS AT SAME TIME AS ARRIVAL OF AMBASSADOR IN ETHIOPIA IS -- AS FELEKE INDICATED -- NOT GOING TO BE WELCOMED BY PMGSE AND CAN ONLY MAKE HIS EARLY DAYS MORE DIFFICULT. MATHERON

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